

**S.B. 1083 – Support: Regionalization – A Good Idea, with an Appropriate Approach**

**Government Administration and Elections Committee**

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Chairs and members of the Committee, my name is Luther Weeks, as you know, I am a Certified Moderator and have observed registrars at work in municipalities across the State. In addition, much of my career was as a manager and observer of management, matching systems to organizations, and matching organizations to systems. I hold two professional degrees in management.

In evaluating various organization structures it is customary to look at Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

The strengths of our current system are:

- a) Its low cost compared to other states, as shown by Matt Waggner on S.B. 1051 last week, and
- b) resistance to fraud or error in statewide elections, based on a decentralized, adversarial system (Yet, not in local elections, where the current system has weaknesses which pose risks.)

Its weaknesses, several of which have been obvious of late are,

- a) its lack of professional training and, in some cases, action,
- b) an inability to attract, grow, and compensate skilled professionals, and
- c) the inability of the system to solve and correct problems

To elaborate on that last point. The Citizen Audit conducted an unofficial recount of Bridgeport in 2010 – we found that votes were not counted and that ballots counted and voters checked-in varied significantly in both directions.

- The current system never investigated, or corrected those specific problems, nor developed effective means of preventing or recovering from such problems. Cases-in-point,
  - towns continue to run out of ballots, and
  - Hartford's recent discrepancies in absentee ballots, accompanied by official reports of more votes counted than ballots, that I believe, have not been investigated, and officially corrected.

The current system has limitations that, in my opinion, cannot be overcome with municipal election management. Regionalization offers opportunities not possible under the limitations of the current system, including:

- a) Regions with multiple full time jobs with specialized expertise, with opportunities for individuals to gain experience to be effective professionals. As articulated by Mr. Waggner last week -- when it comes to elections there is a lot for a single person to know and to manage.
- b) The opportunity for shared expertise and resources can provide more voter service, with regional "vote centers" safely supporting early voting and election-day convenience.

Rome was not built in a day. No matter what change is appropriate, it will require several years to evaluate, plan, and execute a significant transformation, while we continue to support elections along the way. I suspect 1-2 years for the task force and Legislature to choose a direction, 1-2 years for a small agency of appropriate professionals empowered to plan the transition in detail, and likely 2 years to perform the transition. Probate reorganization, a similar, yet simpler, transformation, I believe took at least four years

Thank you.

## What a Complete Analysis Would Look Like

My testimony only outlined a full analysis of our current system and the options for potential change. A full analysis would take several months of evaluation and research.

It would result in an extensive report, with an executive summary:

- Listing the strengths, weaknesses, and limitations of the current system
- Articulating the opportunities, threats, and challenges going forward
  - especially opportunities of more technology for increased voter and candidate service,
  - along with unsurmountable challenges of implementing technology and enhancing convenience under the current system.

It would compare the merits and limitations of alternative courses of action, including:

- The current municipal, adversarial elected registrar system
- The SOTS proposed municipal single appointed registrar system
- A regional system staffed with career professionals

Among its likely conclusions would be:

- The opportunities and challenges cannot be met under the current system, no matter how improved.
- A system of single municipal registrars would solve few problems, would likely cause other problems, and would also not be up to the challenges and opportunities
- A regional, professional system could best meet those challenges and take advantage of the opportunities, at an increased cost over the current inadequately funded, inadequately automated, and inadequately staffed system

## A Story from the Largest Election Jurisdiction in the U.S., Los Angeles County, CA.

LA County is currently running a project to develop specifications for voting equipment to tell vendors what they can provide to LA that serves voters and officials. Hopefully their efforts and those of others will pay-off for Connecticut. Yet, that is not the important story.

LA County's election administration leader is Dean Logan. How does someone become and succeed as leader of the largest election jurisdiction in the country? By education, training, and appropriate, increasing experience. How does one gain such experience? By leading smaller functions and jurisdictions, learning from supervisors and associates.

To attract and grow people like Dean Logan, a jurisdiction needs a big enough job. Growing people from entry level, to competent professional, to leader in the field requires robust full-time jobs. To me, in Connecticut that means regions -- regions with at least five or six full-time career positions.

From Dean Logan's Official Resume: <http://lavote.net/about-us/about-dean-c-logan>

*The Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk is responsible for registering voters, maintaining voter files, administering federal, state, local and special elections and verifying initiatives, referenda and recall petitions. Los Angeles County, with more than 500 political districts and 4.8 million registered voters, is the largest and most complex county election jurisdiction in the country...*

*Logan has over 25 years experience in elections administration, records management and public service. Prior to moving to Southern California, Logan served as the Director of Records, Elections and Licensing Services for King County, Washington, as State Elections Director for the Washington Secretary of State; and as the elected County Clerk and Chief Deputy County Auditor in Kitsap County, Washington...*

*Mr. Logan holds a degree in Organizational Leadership from Azusa Pacific University and an Executive Master of Public Administration from the Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington. He is also an instructor for the Public Sector MPA program at California State University, Northridge. He is married and has two adult children.*

**We may not need to grow, or attract another Dean Logan, yet we need people and jobs that provide professional careers and provide the opportunity for them to deliver professional results.**

